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COIN OPERATED COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

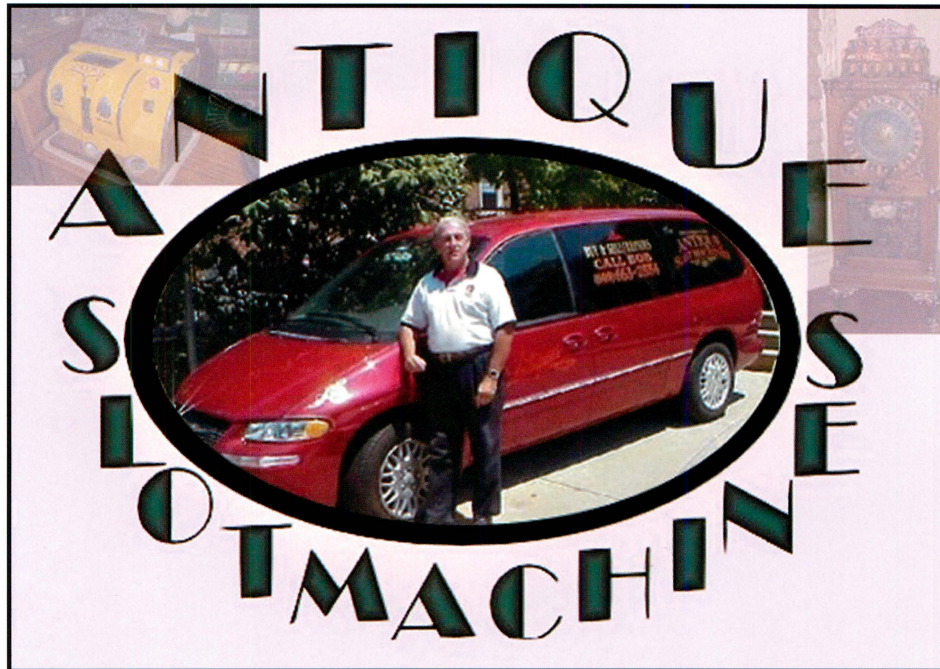


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Message from Your President

Hope you all had a great summer and have found some exciting coin-op machines. The clubs direction is moving along just fine. Our membership continues to grow, unfortunately with rising printing prices and postage rates, dues for the 2003 year will go up to \$29.50. We are doing all we can to keep costs down. At this years C.O.C.A. meeting on Friday, November 14, 2002 at 7:30 we will have a silent auction. Donations of any coin-op machines, related items will be greatly appreciated. All proceeds will benefit the club. Snacks and refreshments will be available. We will be discussing the upcoming elections for officers in 2003. Please attend, as your presence is very important. I personally look forward to seeing you at the greatest coin-op show in the country.

Good Hunting!
Paul Hindin
President C.O.C.A.



In this Issue:

PAGE

- Token Corner4
- Tales of Hunt -
All the Good Ones Have Already Been Found....7
Knowledge is Like Money in the Bank10
- Turn Handle Slowly.....12
- Columbias23
- Southwest Vacation.....27
- Rarefied Vintage31

GUEST SPEAKER

Our special guest speaker for Friday night is one of the elite individuals in the field of coin-op repair and restoration.

He is John Papa, and is going to be sharing many of his secrets, tips, and thoughts on restoration and repair. Whether you're a seasoned coin-op collector or new to the hobby, you are sure to learn something valuable. A don't miss event!

ABOUT THE COVER

The feature article in this issue is brought to us by Alan Sax. Alan shares both his vast knowledge as well as a sampling of his extensive collection of counter games.

Deadline for Next Issue:

JANUARY 20, 2003

THE TOKEN CORNER

by Ric Gandy

The Five Most Common Amusement Machine Tokens

In the past I've discussed some interesting, unusual, and puzzling coin machine tokens. But the chances are slim that the average reader would come across such tokens. So I've decided to devote this month's column to the five most common types of amusement machine tokens. As there are tens of thousands of different tokens that have been used in slot and pinball machines, I've come up with this list of the five most common based on my experience of having examined hundreds of thousands of machine tokens.

These are the tokens you'll most likely encounter in an old machine or in old token accumulations of machine operators. They are discussed below, in order, most common type first.



- 1) *Obverse: For amusement only*
Reverse: This token has no cash or trade value

This is the most common type of slot machine token. Such a token is referred to as a stock token, because it is a general type which the token manufacturers made in large quantities to keep in stock for immediate sale. Operators who bought these tokens didn't want the added expense and delay of ordering custom made tokens with their name or special legends, or they preferred these anonymous tokens.

The tokens have a round hole in the center, and were used to operate many different slot machines. The nickel-sized tokens are most common, but you can easily find ones that are quarter size, dime size, and cent sized. The dime and cent sized tokens lack the word "This" on the reverse, probably because there isn't as much room for the long reverse legend on the smaller tokens.

Most of these tokens were made of brass, but you can find ones that are plated with nickel or zinc, or made of white metal (nickel) or rarely lead. However, the most valuable ones are the bimetallic varieties, where each token is made of two different metals, one forming a star or spoked area around the central hole. The metals brass, copper, and nickel occur in all possible inner-outer combinations.

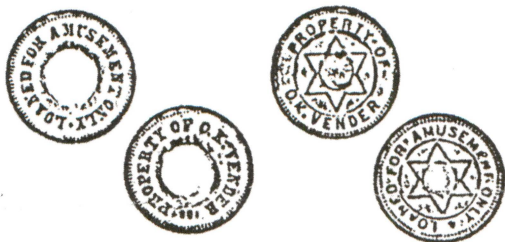
As these tokens were made over a long period of time by several different token manufacturers, there are many different varieties: different styles and spacing of the lettering, and different small ornamental devices (star, dot, or diamond).



- 2) *Obverse: Good for amusement only*
Reverse: No case value

Here we have another stock token, that comes in two different types - with or without a hole in the center. Those with the holes are similar to the tokens above. They come in the same sizes, metals (but not bimetallics), and ornaments (but there's a greater variety, including bowties and ovals).

The solid type, without the hole, also comes in penny, nickel, dime and quarters sizes, with the nickel size most common. These occur in brass, nickel-plated brass, nickel, zinc and lead. I believe that most of these solid types are a little more recent, as they usually are found in association with pinball machine tokens. Thus their primary use may have been in the payout pinball machines of the 1930's and early 1940's.



3) *Obverse: Property of O.K. Vender*
Reverse: Loaned for amusement only

The O.K. Vender tokens are the common tokens that refer directly to a particular type of slot machine. But it is also a stock token because it occurs in such great numbers and in hundreds of varieties.

There are three main types of O.K. Vender tokens. one type has the obverse legend in one line around the central hole, with a single ornament at the bottom (diamond or bowtie). These are brass (some are zinc plated) and nickel or cent sized (dime size ones are scarce).

The second and most common type has the obverse legend in two lines, with an ornament at each side (diamonds or stars). These are nickel size (penny size ones are scarce) and brass (some nickel or zinc plated).

The third type also has the obverse legend in two lines, but the central part of the token is made of iron and contains a large star or spokes-and-dots ornament. The hole in the center is smaller. The outer part of the token is brass, and the whole thing is nickel plated (less commonly zinc or copper plated). Some were made entirely of lead, and without a hole. The nickel size ones are common; the dime and quarter sizes are scarce.



4) *Obverse: This token awarded for skill, R*
(in circle in center)
Reverse: This token has no cash or trade value, R
(in circle in center)

This is a stock pinball machine token, made by the Northwestern Stamp Works of St. Paul, Minn., in the 1930's and 1940's. The R in the center of the token stands for George Roussopolous, the manager of the company. These tokens were sold to establishments that didn't want to use custom made tokens with their name, initials, or address, in their payout pinball machines.

There are many varieties of this token. Most are a little smaller than a nickel (20mm), typical of most pinball machine tokens, and made of nickel-plated brass. Ones in brass, lead, and copper-plated brass also exist, as do 21mm-sized ones in nickel-plated brass, nickel, lead and zinc. And there are differences in the shape and style of the R, positioning of legends, ornaments, etc.

Northwestern Stamp Works supplied most of the tokens used in payout pinball machines, minting thousands of custom pinball tokens for merchants and businesses that had pinball machines on their premises.

They also made similar tokens for the manufacturers of the payout pinball machines, with their initial on the token. These have legends such as "Good For One Free Game" or "One Free Game On Pinball Machine." You can find these pinball tokens with the following initials: B (for Buckley or Bally), D (Daval), E (Evans), G (Gottlieb), G Inc. (Genco), J in a diamond (Jennings), K (Keeney), M (Mills), P (Pace), S (Stoner), etc.



5) *Obverse: a number*
Reverse: Good for 5¢ in trade

Numbered slot machine tokens are very common, but what the numbers mean is still somewhat of a mystery. They could be serial numbers of slot machines, or numbers to represent particular operators. There are tokens with thousands of different numbers. The numbers to from 00 apparently continuously through about 32000, and then very

sparsely to 99880, with a rash of numbers for 60001 to 60240.

Most common are the brass nickel-size ones with a central hole. Older nickel-size ones with the number in the center are also numerous. Similar quarter, dime, cent and half dollar size numbered tokens also exist. There are many different types and varieties of the numbered tokens, as many different token manufacturers must have made them, over a long period of time.

To complicate things, there are different ornaments used on the reverse of the token. They do not occur randomly, but follow a pattern. From about 5000 to 20000 a "+" ornament predominates; from 20000 to 28700 there's an 8-pointed star, from 28700 to 32000 it's a dot; and so on. The same number may occur with several different ornaments. So the ornament may have significance, and could be part of a code.

Token collector, cataloguer and historian Kenneth Smith puts forward a theory that the numbers are codes that can identify the specific operators, and the code is based on a simple decoding wheel. The wheel is a cylinder containing letters of the alphabet, with a rotatable numerical ring at top, laid out as follows:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 0 |
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J |
| K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T |
| U | V | W | X | Y | Z | . | , | - | - |

The last digit of the number (or maybe the ornament) may indicate how many spaces to rotate the number ring. For example, the number 35054 occurs on many stock tokens that may have been

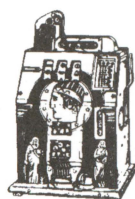
made by the Northwestern Stamp Works of St. Paul. rotate the ring 4 units to the left and you get:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J |
| K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T |
| U | V | W | X | Y | Z | . | , | - | - |

Using this to decode 3505, you can find a S under 3, and A under 5, a P under O, and an A under 5, giving SAPA, a possible abbreviation for Saint Paul. Another very common number, 12439, could decode as MNPO, for Minneapolis. With some fudging you can get many other interesting but inconclusive or coincidental results, using other common numbers.

Another theory is that the numbers were assigned by the token makers, based on order form numbers, to keep track of the operators who wanted an anonymous custom numbered token. This way the operator would only redeem tokens with his number, and not any old stock token with phrases only.

It seems the oldtime operators still around today aren't revealing what the numbers actually represent, as if the numbers were associated with past illegal gambling activities. I'm hoping that there is an old list or book around some where that gives the name and address of the operator corresponding to each different number. Old token exchanges should have had such a reference list, to get the stray tokens back to the original issuers. All that token collectors desire to know is the town where each numbered token was used, as tokens are usually collected and catalogued by state and town.



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TALES OF THE HUNT

Hosted by Jack Freund

I have good news. We have a "Tale" from a slot collector and one from a vending collector. Actually, the slot story is in two parts. The second story will appear in the next issue of COCA TIMES.

I am pleased that some of you have sent in your "Tales of The Hunt" and hope more will follow.

Please submit articles and photos to:

Jack Freund, PO Box 4, Springfield WI 53176, E-mail: jbgum@msn.com

Let's start with the "Slot Tale." It comes from Jeff Frahm, an old friend of mine that is presently living in Colorado. He titles it:

All The "Good Ones " Have Already Been Found? DON'T BELIEVE IT!

The following story is written to give the novice as well as the advanced collector of coin operated gambling devices continued hope in their search for that really special "FIND". There truly are still some great machines out there at the grass roots level that are still affordable and they turn up in the most unlikely places.

.....

My passion for collecting these wonderful old slot machines began quite some time ago, in fact back in 1958 when I was only eleven years old. I used to travel with my parents to that ultimate Mecca of gambling, Las Vegas, Nevada. Being just a kid, I had to satisfy my curiosity by pressing my nose to the window and watch while everyone else was able to madly pull the handles on those mysterious mechanical marvels. At eleven I finally fulfilled my dream of having my own machine to play, and better yet, explore the depths of its inner workings. From that point on, I was hooked and eventually turned this hobby into my full time profession. But that is a separate story in itself that could take up volumes of magazine space.

The story of this relatively recent find began just a few years ago when my wife and daughter and I went on a vacation trip to one of my favorite Old West towns, Durango, Colorado. Thinking it might

be fun to ride on an old steam locomotive; we bought our round trip day excursion tickets and climbed aboard the "Durango-Silverton Railroad" for a two and a half hour ride up the most beautiful mountain passes you've ever seen to the old silver mining town of Silverton, Colorado. The trip was fascinating, but by the time we reached the end of the line, we all had built a great thirst and were ready to stretch our legs and explore this interesting old mining town. As everyone scattered off the train, we looked around to find somewhere to have lunch. The closest place to the train depot was this ancient old bar called "The Bent Elbow Saloon". Right off, I liked the name so we headed over there to try it out. Upon being seated, I was fascinated to look around at all the great old antiques that adorned the place, from the old tin ceiling to the intricately carved bar and back bar. As the waitress came over with our menus, I almost fell out of my chair when I caught a glimpse, over in the corner, of a very tired looking old floor machine that looked as if it had stood in that spot for the last hundred years. I could barely spare the time to look at the menu and order before I had to get up and give this treasure a closer look. Leaving my wife and daughter behind at the table, I casually strolled over to see just what was sitting there. It turned out to be a

five-cent Mills “Chicago” in a musical cabinet (minus music box), which hadn’t been operated for many years. My curiosity got the better of me so I bellied up to the bar, ordered myself a cold beer and struck up a conversation with the bartender, who happened to also be the owner of this fine establishment. I introduced myself and handed him one of my business cards. I explained to him that my business was buying, selling, repairing or restoring just such machines as he had displayed in his bar and if the inclination should ever strike him for any of my services, “give me a call”. He asked what I’d give him for it the way it sat and I shot him a low-end figure to see what he said. He was very cordial and after reminiscing about the machine’s known history, he stuck my card in his pocket and I went back to enjoy my lunch. He had said that as far as he could remember, the machine had been operated in several gambling saloons in Silverton since the turn of the

Century and had wound up in The Bent Elbow back around World War II. Someone had broken the main actuator back in 1947 and it hadn’t been played since. They just kept it around in the saloon as a conversation piece because it was so “pretty to look at”. I figured that I didn’t stand much of a chance ever getting my hands on it but at least it had been fun to see it and talk to an old-timer who actually remembered when it was still in operation.

I had forgotten all about it after a year went by. Then out of the blue I received a phone call from a woman who identified herself as the wife of the owner of The Bent Elbow Saloon. She explained to me that her husband had recently passed away and that she had found my business card in the back of the cash register and that her husband had written a note on the back of it, stating that I was interested in the old “Chicago” machine. She would be selling

the Saloon and its contents in the near future but since her husband had died without leaving a Will, she would have to wait until everything went

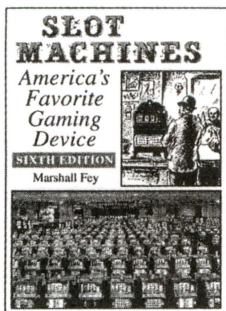
through probate. She asked if my offer was still good. I assured her that it was and if she would like some money up front, I’d be happy to write her a check right then. She assured me that it wasn’t necessary and that I’d be hearing from her in the future. After hanging up, my stomach was in a knot. I couldn’t believe that my conversation of a year ago might actually result in me securing this wonderful old piece of American history. I hadn’t any idea how long it might take for the courts to clear up this legal mess, but I knew that all I could do was wait it out. Not wanting to sound too eager, I forced myself to wait about six months before calling her back to see what the status was. She told me that the court was dragging its feet but that she would hold the machine for me and not sell it to anyone else. I had been



made similar promises in years past only to be disappointed by some high dollar offer from someone else or a distant relative from back East that wanted it! But, what can you do? Well, the wait dragged on for a year and a half from her first call. Finally, in February, two years ago, she called me and said the court battle was over and the machine was mine, if I still wanted it. I about jumped through the phone line assuring her that I definitely still wanted it. There was only one little catch; Silverton is way up in the mountains. The road up there from where I live in Fort Collins, requires driving through several passes that are over eleven thousand feet and are totally choked off with snow and impassable at that time of year. Again, I tried to get her to let me send her some money to hold it. Again, she refused, saying that her word was good and that she trusted me to show up later in the year. Well, it wasn’t until

May of that year when the roads were finally clear that I could manage to get away and drive back up there to retrieve my prize. My wife and I made a mini vacation of it and drove our trusty Dodge Ram up the winding mountain roads back to Silverton. The "Chicago" had been moved from the Bent Elbow to a small warehouse in town as the Saloon had been sold and the new owners had taken possession. It looked pretty sad sitting there among piles of junk and other dilapidated antiques. The cash rapidly changed hands and we headed back home with our shabby old machine, much in need of restoration. Upon arrival, we unloaded it into the shop and I began to take stock of just what I had and what it would take to get her back to factory original condition. Years ago, someone had performed their idea of artistry and painted all the metal and wood trim with gold gilt paint. Obviously, every last piece of this machine would have to be disassembled, striped and refinished. The missing music box and linkage would have to be located along with the missing "music box front grill casting". Everything else was there and in need of a thorough and careful cleaning. The exterior castings would need replating but not by just any old plating shop. Great machines of that era (which the serial number revealed to have been made in 1901) deserve the exact same type of plating that was used at the turn of the Century. Watts Nickel (or grey nickel as some

call it) has a look all its own. It differs greatly from the bright nickel that 99% of the plating shops use today. There is only one place to go to get the best job done today in Watts Nickel and that is to Roger Kislingbury of Pasadena CA. Roger not only does all my plating but he also was instrumental in getting me the missing musical cabinet front grill that I needed as well as the linkage for the music box. That brings up the other missing piece of the puzzle, the music box itself. With another phone call to the other coast, Larry Debaugh just happened to have the correct music box for that machine and was willing to sell it at a fair price. Upon receiving it I immediately shipped it out to Roger to have him give it a going over to be sure that everything mated up to the linkage he was furnishing. While all this was going on, as I said before, everything else came completely apart and I totally restored the mechanism, along with the broken actuator, and the cabinet to their former glory. I was very careful to not over restore it as so many others have done in the past, ruining the "look" of a fine old antique. After about eight months, the pieces of the puzzle all came back together. The machine with the music box plays like a dream and ultimately was worth the wait. Today, it is the first thing you see when entering the front door of our home. It is a pleasure to display and a joy to demonstrate to everyone that drops by.



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*Our second Tale was sent in by Howard Saidman from Pennsylvania.
Let's title this one:*

Knowledge is Like Money In The Bank

Several years ago I was passing through a town with an auction gallery. I am not sure why, but I decided to swing by the auction gallery to see if I could pick up a flyer of an upcoming auction. I ran into the auctioneer in the lobby, and he said, "Hey! Do you know anything about planters peanut items?" I said a little, and he took me into the back to show me a cast iron Planters Peanut statue, which I told him, I believed was fake. But, sitting right next to the statue, was a complete Zeno 5 cent Collar Button machine, filled with buttons, but broken glass. Next to it was the mech for a 10 cent Zeno Collar button. I asked about them, and he said, "Oh, they will be in an auction next week."

I took off from work early, drove 2 hours to this auction. The Zenos were in one lot together, and to my dismay all the collar buttons were gone. I also looked at the 10-cent mech, in brighter light, and discovered it was New Old Stock. The 5-cent was very rusted. The lot came up and I figured I would jump in when it hit \$400. Well, the first bid was \$10, and then it stalled. I was amazed. I threw my hand up at \$15, and no one else bid, and I got all of it. I guess without the buttons no one knew what it was.

All of a sudden I hear laughter, I looked up, and the auctioneer is holding an original embossed Ford gumball machine globe, with decal. He was making jokes, on what you could do with it. I quickly bid \$5, and he yelled SOLD. I heard a few people behind comment on what an idiot I must be to be buying this junk. I then saw the Ford machine that

went with the embossed globe, but it had a newer Ford globe. I eventually wound up with that for less than \$100. Needless to say I had a very happy ride home.

Since I was at this auction I ended up getting on their mailing list. About 2 years later I get a flyer, with a picture of a Masters Fantail with decal, and a Masters Gooseneck. I decided since I was lucky at this place, I would go back. When I arrived I saw the Fantail, which was in great shape, and the Gooseneck. There were also several junk machines like Toy and Joy, and a newer Victor.

I spied my competition and saw one Jukebox dealer who I assumed would recognize a Fantail. Well, the auction started. My heart sank when the Toy and Joy hit \$75, and the Victor went for over \$100. I figured, the Masters was going to be high. The Gooseneck came up first, and went for well over \$400. Oh well, I thought, my trip would be worthless. The fantail came up. I was getting ready to bid when it hit the \$700 mark. Well, it opened and stalled at \$300. I could not believe it, \$100 for a Victor, over \$400 for a Gooseneck, and the Fantail stalls at \$300? I quickly started bidding, and the machine again stalled at \$350. I was the high bidder, and was in shock when the auctioneer said SOLD. I could not figure out why the Gooseneck went higher than the Fantail. Well, after the auction I sort of figured it out when the buyer of the Gooseneck came up to me and said. Do you collect machines, and if so, can you tell me what I just bought?

Knowledge is truly "money in the bank."

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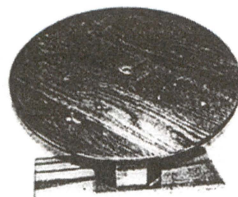
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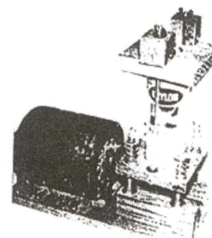
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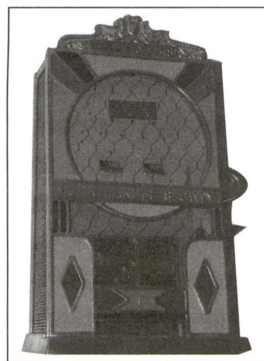
Cover Story by **Alan Sax**

ROCKAWAY. It was later copied, or licensed by O.D. Jennings. Fey introduced a 3 jacks in 1931 to honor Nevada's new gaming city and named the machine RENO. The machine was a 3 jackpot and had a spinning wheel which had fortunes printed on it. This may have been for legal reasons to license it or operate it as a skill game or fortune teller, rather than the gambling machine it really was.



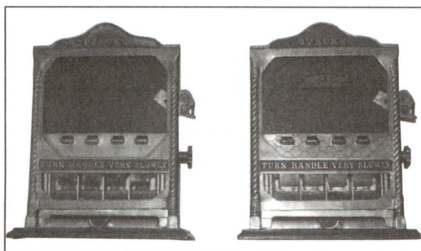
where the common versions read TURN HANDLE SLOWLY.

Rockola had their own line of Jacks machines. Their line featured some of the most ornately designed machines of the era. The 3 JACKS had an all aluminum case with an ornately cast front. The 4 Jacks was called FOUR ACES, implying like in poker, that 4 ACES was better than 4 JACKS. The 4 ACES was made in 1 cent, 5 cent, and 1 cent gum-ball vender. The Rockola FIVE JACKS was strikingly designed with 5 Jack figures, as usually seen on playing cards, standing guard over the five jackpots on the front of the machine. The FIVE JACKS had a quarter-sawn oak cabinet and was copied by Pace Manufacturing Company that called their version SKIL-FLIP. The Pace machine had a wood cabinet that was painted green.

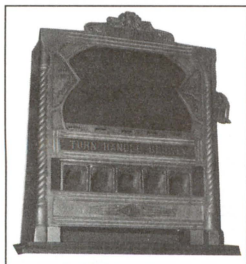


Field Manufacturing, in Peoria, Illinois, came out with their complete line of jacks machines in 1930. They made a 2 jackpot machine called BABY JACKS which featured a spring loaded shooter that flipped the penny around the outer ring of the playfield, sometimes circling 2 or 3 times before landing. This machine was also made in a double version, TWIN PLAY, of which only two are known to have survived. Field also subcontracted the machine, making it private label for Evans and Sons, in Geneva, Ohio and Silver King in Indianapolis, Indiana, both of whom brought the games out under their own names.

Field made a 3 JACKS and a 4 Jacks. Both were made in 1 cent and 5 cent versions, although it seems about 95 percent of the machines seen were 1 cent. Field's



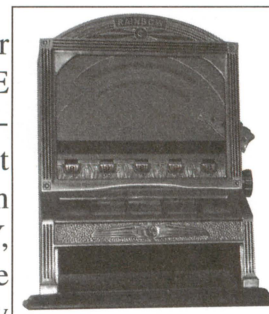
most popular machine was the FIVE JACKS. It was made in 1 cent and 5 cent. Another variation was made with a horseracing theme which was embossed PLAY THE FIELD on the center of the machine,



The original 5 jacks made by Fey, THE ROCK-AWAY, had Fey's company initials cast into the center (C, F, & S) and also on a plate near where the coin entered the teeter-totter. The original Fey machines had oak cabinets with green stain, much like the slot cabinets of Caille and Superior.

The ROCKAWAY was copied by O.D. Jennings, who also called their version THE ROCKAWAY. The machine has a "J" cast into the front where Fey had their initials. The Jennings ROCKAWAY is known in 3 varieties. The most common is the 1 cent, which just says The Rockaway on the top. The 5 cent does not say anything on the top, and the 1 cent gumball version says BALL GUM on the top.

Jennings made another beautiful machine called THE RAINBOW. THE RAINBOW was a five jackpot machine, very similar in design to THE ROCKAWAY, except it did not feature the spinning disc. A brilliantly colored rainbow was shown arcing across the playfield, enticing the player to flip his coin and get it to land in the "Pot of Gold" found at the end of the rainbow. This machine is as rare as the Fey ROCK-AWAY, and was made in both 1 cent and 5 cent.



Another interesting variation of the ROCKAWAY was "The UGLY GREEN MACHINE WITH THE PLUNGER ON TOP AND A SPINNING DISC BELOW." This is a mystery machine which has never been featured in any books or articles. It has never been seen in any ads and its maker is unknown. It is a 4 jackpot machine. The jackpots are covered by a criss-cross pattern on the front casting protecting the jackpots. The cabinet is stained green, like many of the other Jacks machines. It features a plunger on the top, like the CLAWSON 3 JACKPOT. It also has a rocking disc like the ROCKAWAY or the earlier THE CARLO. The only known example of this machine is in the author's collection.



A.B.T. made a 5 Jacks called CASINO. Although probably made in the 1930's it has a more modern look than most of the other Jacks machines discussed. The mechanism is identical to the Rockola FIVE JACKS. In fact, the late Dick Bueschel, noted historian, speculated that the Rockola machines might have actually been contracted for manufacturing by A.B.T.

A.B.T. also made a 3 Jacks called TRIP-L-JAX which they may have private labeled for Keeney

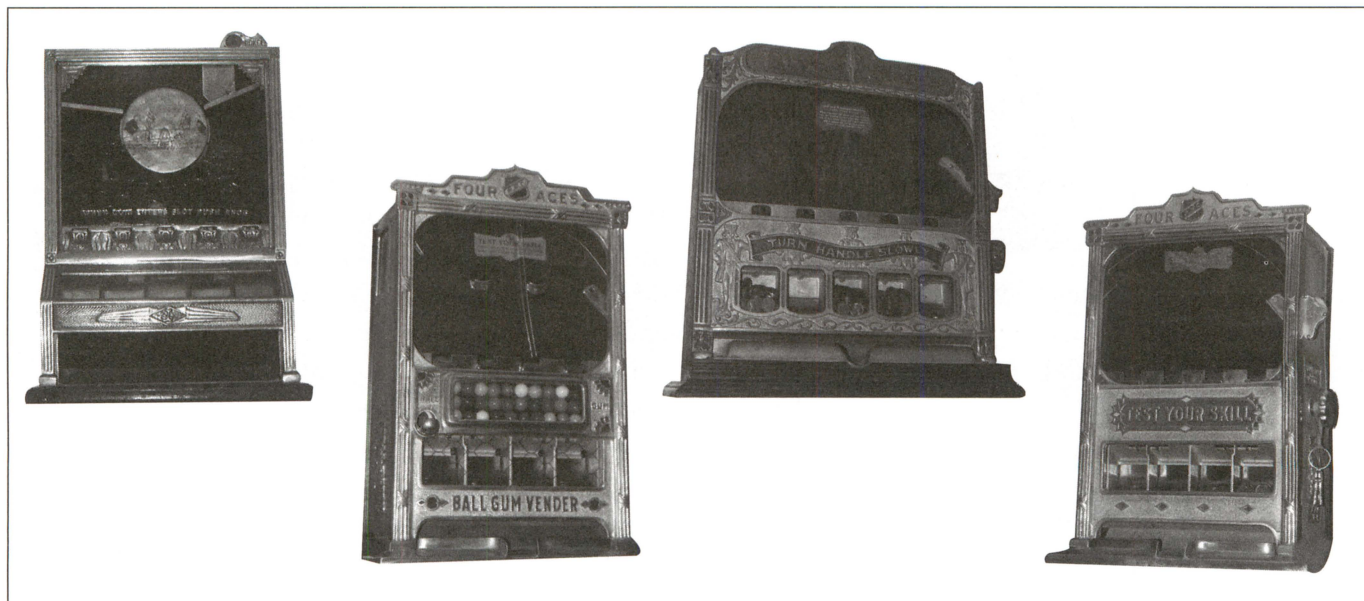
and other makers. The TRIP-L-JAX in the author's collection has a Keeney decal on the side.

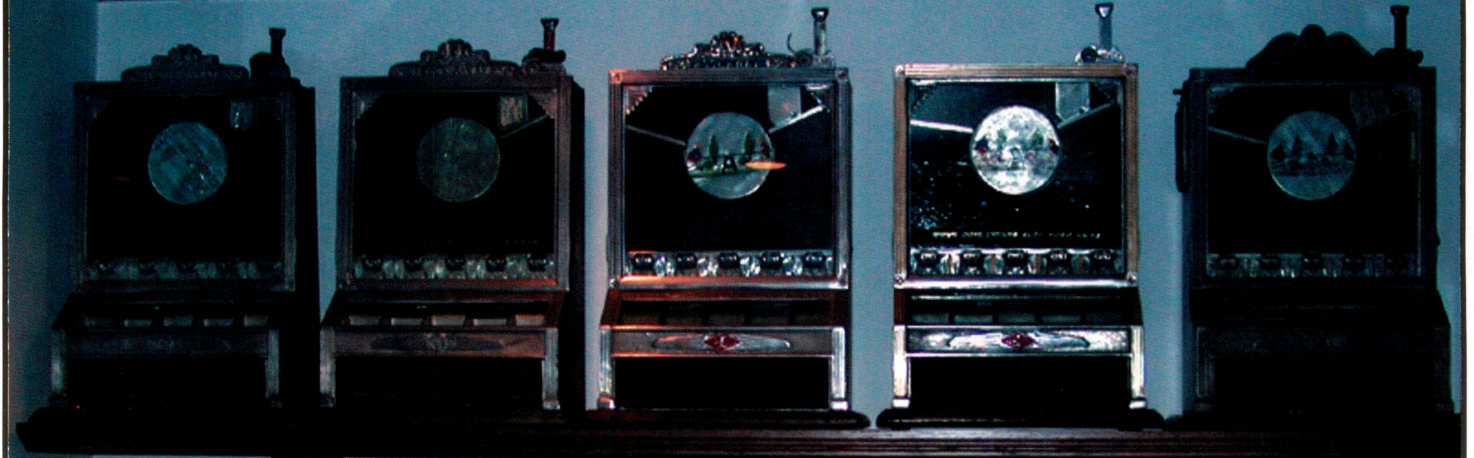
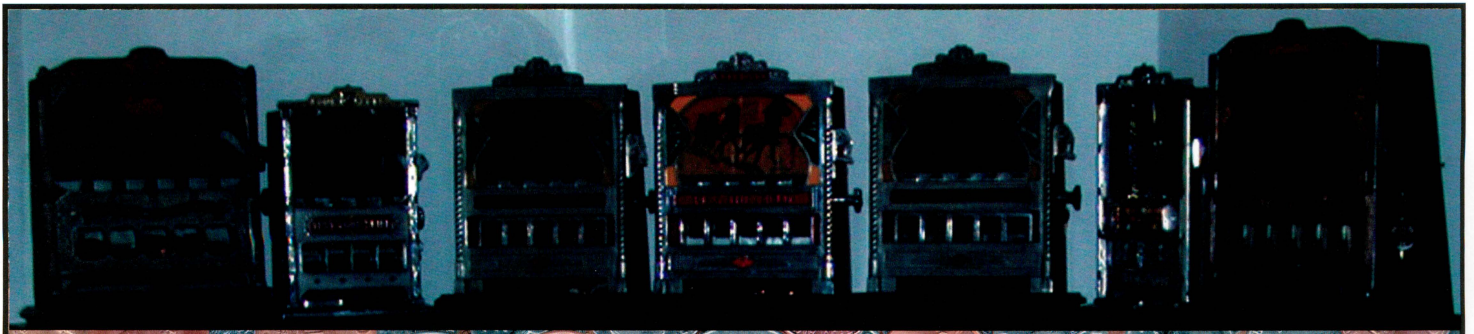
Pace made a 3 Jacks and a 5 Jacks. The Pace 3 Jacks looked like the Field, except the 3 Jacks name was written in script at the top of the machine.

Bally, or its predecessor, LION MANUFACTURING and LION PRODUCTS made or marketed a machine called THREE BIG JACKS. The machine in the author's collection has the original decal from LION PRODUCTS.

The Jacks machines' popularity led to many more revivals of the machine. Auto-Bell made a 5 Jacks machine in the 1950's with a plain wood cabinet and a silk screened glass on the front. Royal Bell made a copy of the Fey 3 Jacks in the 1980's which was operated on dimes. Several hundred 5 Jacks were made in Taiwan in the 1990's. They were a crude copy of the Field 5 Jacks. The cabinets were of a poor quality wood, sometimes referred to as banana tree wood. The coin flipper casting had a numeral "1" in the area to the left of where the inserted penny rests. The castings were lacking in detail and did not fit particularly well.

From the 1890's to the 1990's all of these machines had many things in common. They were quite a bit of fun to play, and they made quite a bit of money for the operator. The design was simple and reliable. That's why they are still popular and highly sought after by collectors.





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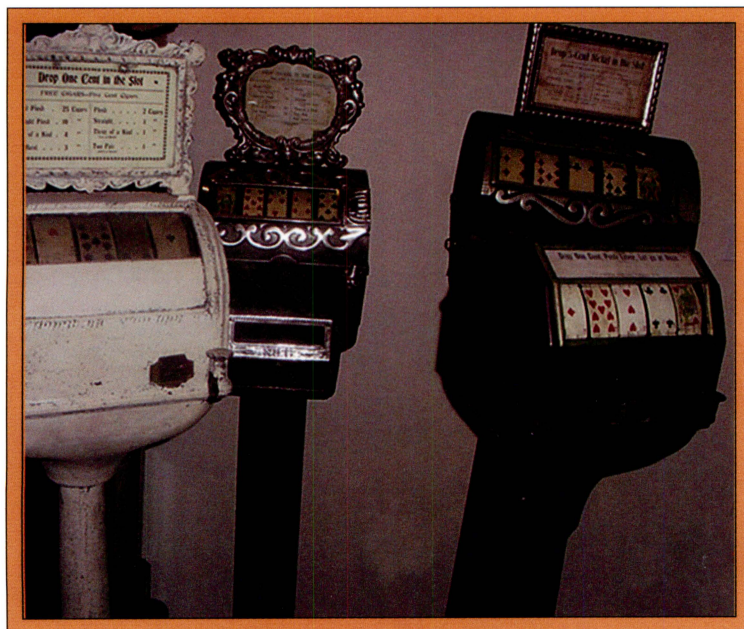


1896 Clawson "Bee Hive"

One of 5 Known Examples. See Page 6 of Last C.O.C.A.Issue.

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Electric Pig - French



1915 Tall Case
Yellow Kid
Pulver



Smiling Sam
Aluminum
1928 Peanut Vendor



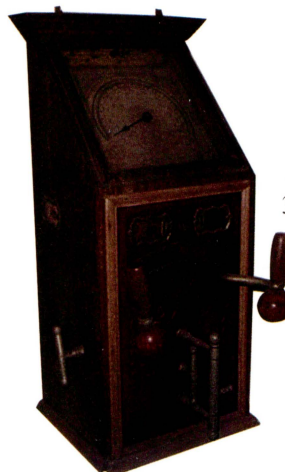
Happy Jap
Cast Iron
1902 Clock Work
Gum Vendor



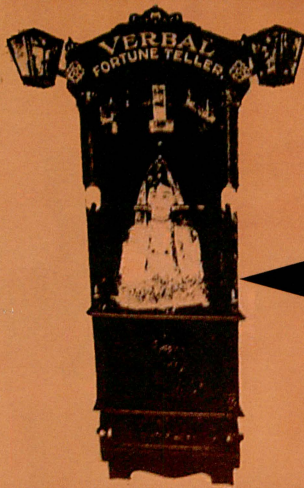
The Zwerg
(Dwarf or Gnome)
Zinc and Iron, Circa 1900
Chocolate Vendor,
Almost 5 feet tall,
A Coin in shoulder releases
a bar of chocolate



1904 Mills
Novelty Co.
Grip & Blow
Original
Unrestored
Condition,
One of a Few
Survivors



1902 Enterprise
3 Coin Entrance
Arcade Game
Left Side is
Electricity,
Squeezer,
Grip and Twist
in Front

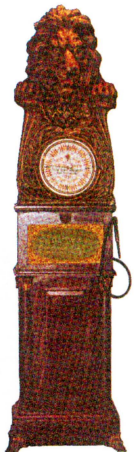
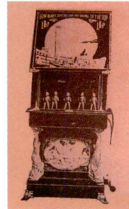


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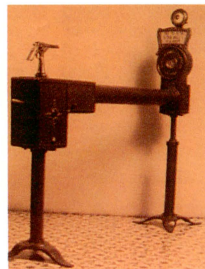
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COLUMBIAS - Trash or Treasure!

by Bob Stone

Having written several articles concerning slot machines, I put this one on the agenda about four years ago. There was a stumbling block, however. While I knew much about the product itself, I knew nothing about the company who manufactured these unique slot machines, the Groetchen Tool Co. of Chicago.

I turned to my friend Dick Bueschel and told him of my plans. Dick was enthused, and said he had much related material in his files, which he would be glad to share with me. Unfortunately, with Dick's untimely death, it never came to pass. And my enthusiasm waned - until recently. I decided that I would do the article with or without the company history while I was still "on the top side of the grass".

Recently, via the internet plus a couple of phone calls, I made an attempt through the Chicago Public Library. Unfortunately, this came to a dead end. They even have a long list of companies from the Chicago area going back to the 1800's, but no Groetchen Tool Co. (130 N. Union St., Chicago). It's also interesting to note that during the war years the company changed its name to Groetchen Tool & Mfg. Co. with a slightly different address, 126 N. Union Ave., Chicago 6, Illinois.

So, all I know is from readily available literature. The company introduced a number of trade stimulators in the early thirties, and the Columbia slot machine in about 1934. Another piece of information for which I haven't got a clue is the original price of a machine. The company played it cool in their ads with "Write for prices."

The two Manuals which are in general circulation, and which are post war show a price of \$145., but slots of all kinds being in short supply at the time were commanding much higher prices. I'm sure that the original prices were less than half that amount.

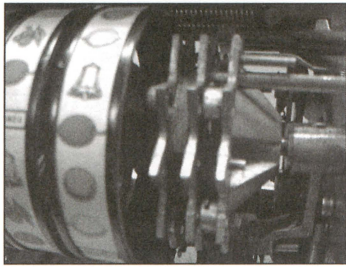
When it comes to the machines themselves, I can say that I've restored/repared about 30 of these in

as many years, and have examined probably twice that number, which leads me into some of the things that I do know.

For starters, much credit is due Groetchen for having developed a low cost slot designed entirely differently from the "standard" as used by Jennings, Mills, Watling, Pace, and most of the others. The ability to quickly change the denomination from penny through quarter must have been a huge selling point, particularly during the depression years. Another feature which must have lighted up the eyes of the operators was that the last coins in were the first ones paid out, so that those who were up to no good and who used slugs, got their own bogus coins back. Instead of a coin tube, it featured a rotary coin carousel. This design resulted in a much easier handle pull than the larger machines, with the possible exception of the A.C. Multibell.

It appears that the Columbia was an engineering work in progress throughout its production history, exclusive of new model features such as the change from the rotary coin "escalator" to the "check separator". By this, I mean more subtle changes to all of the elements which made up the machine. For example, the real early production sported an external handle stop bumper which was cast aluminum with a flat surface recessed so that a flat piece of rubber was cemented on. There was no bumper for the handle return. This was quickly replaced with the pair of round bumpers seen on all later machines, which absorbed the shock at both ends of the handle cycle. Two major cast iron parts were replaced with ones of aluminum or pot metal. There were two types of reel stops - round rollers and fixed - pointed - micarta. Some back doors were plain, and others had a loop near the bottom to which a chain could be attached to prevent theft. I won't bore you with more examples, but the changes are very numerous, believe me. Oops! One more significant change involves the mechanical means for determining the payout. The original

early production machines relied on pins of various lengths mounted on the outside reel “disk” to stop the payout “feeler” at the correct depth, to enable



correct payout. This system was soon replaced with a simple sawtoothed plate which a projection on the “feeler” engaged. The

plates are stamped with either a C for Cigarettes, or an M for Money.

Apparently Groetchen, unlike Mills decided to purchase their cases, and Churchill, a local cabinet maker was their supplier. The Churchill decal can be seen on the inside of the cases. There were basically two types of cabinets. One was made of solid wood, while the other was veneered. The latter is more frequently found in a damaged condition, as the veneer lifted and was then broken off.

Real early machines had castings painted with wrinkle finish, while later most had hammertone finishes. Others sported polished aluminum, and gold anodizing.

One of the detractions of the Columbia's is the fear that collectors have at the mere mention of “pot metal”. Not to worry! It's rare that these machines have a part which has deteriorated. And if it hasn't by now, it won't. (You can read all about it in my article “POT METAL” published in the November 2001 issue of the C.O.C.A. Times.)

As far as parts availability is concerned, most everything can be found. Exceptions might be the unusual operating handles and coupling assembly found on some of the “tall” Columbias with their higher cash boxes.

Items which are being reproduced include back door, award card, reel strips (3 “fruit” types - no cigarette), and the common low profile cash box.

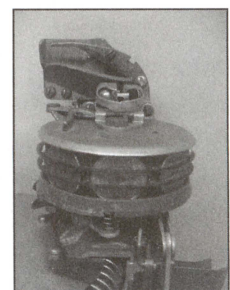
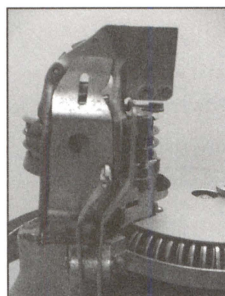
Now let's look at the Columbias as collectibles. Most slot collectors have in the past looked down their noses at these machines, and visualize one or two models as having been produced. Nothing could be further from the truth! There is no question in my mind whatsoever, that a good representative collection of Columbias would occupy a large

room, with perhaps as a minimum about 20 to 30 machines. That's a sizeable collection. In addition, it would include a number of models which appear to be relatively or very scarce. Let's look at what such a collection might include.

There's the early machines which can be spotted by the round aluminum tag with the serial number, located on the side of the cabinet opposite the handle. (Later machines had the serial number stamped on the cabinet base toward the rear on the handle side.) Note that without exception the mechanisms were also stamped with the serial number. I've noted that on the later post war “Deluxe” models, the serials are lower than they should be for continuous numbering. This suggests that there were other series of numbers. While discussing serial numbering, there's another identifier of some sort on the lower rear of about every mechanism I've seen. It's hand applied in black paint with large combinations of letters and numerals. I've no idea what they signify. Initial production also had somewhat different castings with black wrinkle finish. The Columbia circular plate on the front was cast aluminum, as opposed to the later stamped, embossed brass plate.

Another way to spot the early machines is that they had small, narrow real strips (20 symbol) which are recessed into the metal reels, and some, but not all of these, sported a magnifying glass window in order to better see the symbols. As with slots made by other manufacturers, the machines stopped at every other symbol, so they were actually 10 stop machines.

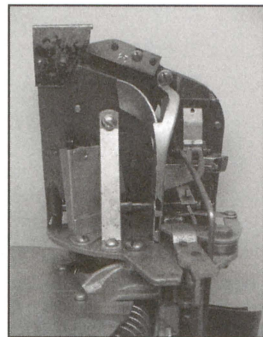
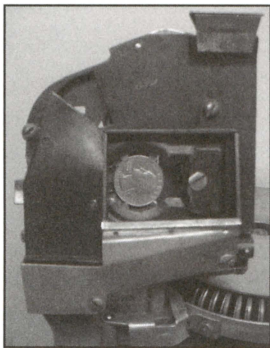
Then came the version which, although it had many production design changes to the mechanism, sort of became the standard. Both of these had the rotary coin acceptor on top, which also contained a tilt mechanism. Another neat feature of these



machines was the inclusion of a bag containing the three items needed to convert the machine from penny, nickel, dime, and quarter. These were the coin entry bushing, the denomination plate, and the coin diverter plate for the coin head so that only the correct denomination was accepted - the rest being returned to the coin tray. Today, these bags aren't at all common.

Another variation was the introduction of the concealed payout. This was a simple, but ingenious modification which consisted of a coin chute with a coin diverter lever accessible inside the machine. The diverter chute ended at the special back door which in itself had a small lockable payout door. When set to divert, the winnings would accumulate against the door for later removal. Thus the machine didn't look like a payout machine from the front. These machines had a spring loaded coin tray which had to be pulled out to access the winnings when set for front payout. Also, the jackpot was token payout. Columbia jackpot tokens are quite scarce and playing tokens very scarce.

Around the same time, circa 1938, another feature was introduced, the check separator. The rotary coin acceptor on top of the machine was replaced by a single coin viewing window which held the check separator mechanism. These machines frequently



sported cigarette style real strips. Both types of coin acceptors were co-produced.

Apparently Groetchen decided that their machines would be more saleable if they were made larger. Thus the birth of the Club Model Jackpot Bell, circa 1938. This was simply accomplished by mounting the standard mechanism on top of a two inch high cast aluminum pedestal, with a corre-

sponding increase in the height of the case, castings, door, and cash box. This model sported highly polished aluminum castings. Nice looking!

With the exception of finishes such as gold anodizing and changes to the handle design, the later counter top models were much the same as the Club Model.

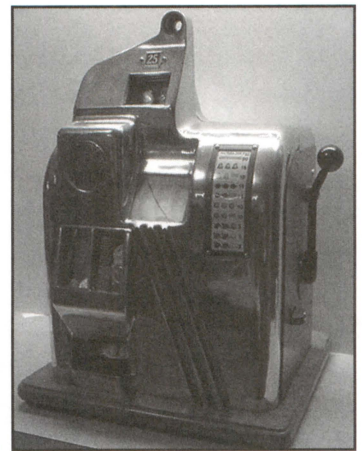
Groetchen also played around with console machines such as the Sugar King, the Twin Falls (two machines in one), the Deluxe Club Highboy, and perhaps others. Console machines are not at all common. Apparently, they weren't all that popular.

It's been said that some of the postwar counter machines were revamps. However, most of the slot revamp companies put their own company names on their work. I've never seen any Columbia with a revamp company's name on it.

I haven't mentioned the names of a number of other machines such as the "Royal", the 50¢ "Eagle", or the "Corona" with its Mills style escalator. Try and find one. As a matter of fact, try and find a machine with a side vender - not impossible, but a challenge.

In summary, the writer is of the opinion that putting together a comprehensive collection of these modestly priced machines would represent a substantial effort. In any event, I vote for "Treasure". Go get 'em!

P.S. The best reference for depicting Columbias (and most other Slots plus Trade Stimulators) is the Collector's Treasury of Antique Slot Machines from Contemporary Advertising, by author Peter Bach. It covers the period 1925-1950. It was copyrighted 1980, and published by Dan Post. It's a must for any serious slot collector. The author welcomes any and all feedback at bobstone@attbi.com.



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SOUTHWEST VACATION

by John S. Carini

This year our family vacation included Arizona and southern California. On June 8th, we flew in to Phoenix, AZ and rented a car. It was 118 degrees! We had a couple of destinations in mind for that first day. First, the Brass Armadillo mall. We had visited other brass Armadillo Mall's in both Denver and Iowa, and were impressed with the size and nice selection available there. The Phoenix shop was nice, though not as large or full as the other locations. Here we found only a few common/over-priced machines like Oak Acorns and Northwestern '60s. A bit disappointed, we left without making a purchase.

Then we visited the city of Glendale, known as the antique capitol of Arizona. Glendale is about 15 minutes northwest of Phoenix. There were dozens of antique shops in this city, all within walking distance of each other. My wife commented on all the fine glassware, china and tea sets which were priced quite reasonably. In the second shop we visited, Apple Tree Antiques, I found a 1930's Hawkeye bell



ringer with a very small crack in the globe. The machine was in nice overall condition, working, had a key and the original decal. I was able to purchase it for \$112.50 - see photo. We visited several other nice shops in the area, and one in particular had many coin-op machines. The store was packed with low and mid-range coin-op including Regals, Perk-ups, a

Rocket Ship, Northwestern '33s with barrel lock, lighter fluid dispensers and lots of automotive advertising. Everything in the area that we did find and like, seemed to be priced right at book value. We left, knowing there were still many more days of antiquing to go. We had a 5 hour drive through the hot summer desert to our next destination, Pasadena, CA.

We felt the temperature extreme - going from 118

degrees in Arizona, to 60 degree weather in Pasadena. When we got to our hotel in Pasadena, it was quite late - about 9:30pm. The hotel had given away our room and had only one room left - the deluxe suite - and they upgraded us at no extra cost. The room was very nice and provided us with a good night sleep for the Pasadena flea market the next morning. The Pasadena flea market is often featured on TV, a favorite stomping ground for the Kovel's television series "Flea Market finds".



We got to the Pasadena flea market as it was opening Sunday morning. The entrance looked more like a circus than a flea market - see photo. The show is quite large, and products were grouped logically. By that I mean they

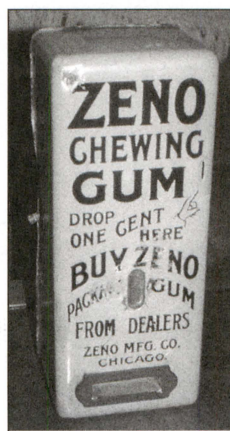
had a section with new, overstock products; another grouping with rummage and lots of vintage clothing; and a third area with antiques and collectibles. Overall we were disappointed. We had a lot of high hopes, after seeing it featured on TV, but covered it in a couple of hours and left empty handed. The only coin-op we even saw, was an Oak Acorn with a cracked globe for \$45 and a Universal Almond nut machine, restored, for \$125. I guess we are spoiled, living here in the Midwest, because we found it to be not nearly as nice as Chicago area flea markets such as Kane county, Sandwich and Elkhorn. We left, and decided to try some of the antique shops in Pasadena that afternoon. We seemed to find Oak Acorns everywhere, priced from \$45 to over \$100. In one of the shops in Pasadena, I found a 1940's Lawrence 5-cent bulk vendor. It was rough, and priced at \$400.

Monday was set aside as a family day, and we

visited Universal Studio's. We left after a few hours, and headed for San Diego.

We stopped along the way to antique, in Orange California. We got there about 2:00pm and that town had so many wonderful shops we didn't have time to visit them all that day. They had dozens of really big shops - you could easily spend an hour in each. The first shop we went into, I found a 1950's Topper filled with gum and charms. I picked it up for \$88, which is probably more than even book value, but the machine was in nice condition and had some neat embossing on the flap - see photo. As I was paying for my purchase, my wife came running up to the counter carrying a yellow porcelain Zeno case. She sarcastically asked "did you miss something?". I couldn't believe

the whole family had walked right by it and everyone missed it but Sandy. Upon inspection it was missing the back door and most of the mechanism. She bought it for me for Father's Day, paying \$110 - see photo. Since that time I've purchased a reproduction back door. This was the first shop, and the store clerk told me I would find gumball machines throughout the city. She was right. We continued to shop. Most shops had a few interesting pieces, but usually priced at book value. And, there were 2 shops in town devoted exclusively to coin-op. One shop had lots of nice restored mid range coin-op and automotive advertising pieces for sale. The other shop was filled with 2 levels of coin-op machines, all in restored condition, many of them high end. In one shop, I picked up a 1930's Daval cent-a-smoke for \$250. It is missing some of the internal parts, and I plan on restoring the piece - see photo. The family agreed Orange was one of the best antique spots we've ever been to.



Tuesday was family day again, and we visited the San Diego Zoo.

Wednesday we decided to do some local antiquing in San Diego. We started out in the downtown area at T&R Antiques Warehouse. It was a nice shop, but we didn't find any coin-op there. We also visited Adams Avenue Antique Row. This was supposed to be a hot antique district, but we found most shops had closed. The road was under construction, the area was run down (we saw a rat run across the road in front of us), and we didn't find anything of interest in the few shops that were open.

We decided to try antiquing in Ocean City, a half hour drive north of San Diego. This was a nice antique town. A bit touristy, but there were a fair number of shops. We found some unique old parking meters, an ABT hunters game, but few other coin-op machines and nothing worth purchasing. We did take some time out to visit the beach. My son Nick had fun catching the tiny sea crabs that were plentiful in the rocks along the ocean. They were small and almost looked like spiders.

Thursday was family day again and we went to Tijuana, Mexico. No trip to Tijuana is complete unless you come back with a sack full of junk, and we purchased our share including cheap toys, pottery and a couple of leather belts.

Friday, we drove back to Scottsdale, Arizona. The freeway back is only miles from the Mexican border, and throughout the drive we saw border patrol police everywhere. We stopped at a rest area, and my wife got out of the car without shoes. The desert heat was stifling, and within 20 seconds she was screaming and jumping back into the car, with burned, blistered feet. When we got to Scottsdale, we stopped at a couple of large antique malls - the Antique Centre and Antique Trove. These two very large malls are right next to each other. We found juke boxes and Coca-Cola machines and some com-

mon gumball machines, but they were priced too high.

On Saturday, we had made plans to visit fellow coin-op collector Chuck Weninger in Tucson, a 2 hour drive South. He had an impressive collection of trade stimulators, juke boxes, gumball machines, pinball machines, and lots of trade stimulators. We had an enjoyable day seeing his collection, visiting some of the local antique shops and nice Mexican restaurant for lunch.

Later that night, when we were back at our hotel, we got a call from Dave Cook, inviting us to view

his collection. Dave has a beautiful home, and walking through the front door is like walking into a museum. He has a large amount of various high end coin-op machines, chewing gum and advertising - displayed very nicely.

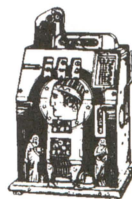
Sunday we flew back to Milwaukee, exhausted. It's funny how whenever we vacation, we leave home with 3 suitcases and 1 carry on, but always return with at least 3 additional carry-on bags. So, where will you find us next? We will be visiting Springfield, Ohio in September for their big flea market extravaganza!



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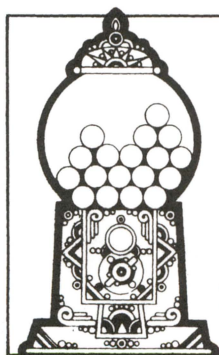
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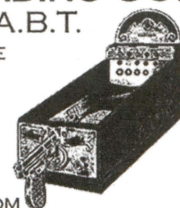
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| Grandbois Cylinder | \$25 |
| Hamilton | \$75 |
| Lucky Boy/Bloyd | \$30 |
| NW 33 Frosted | \$40 |
| NW 33 Junior Tall | \$65 |
| Regal Cylinder | \$30 |
| Regal Pear | \$35 |
| Silver King | \$35 |
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| Victor Cylinder | \$30 |
| Victor Square | \$30 |

Original Globes

| | |
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| Abbey Lantern | \$40 |
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| Advance Round | \$50 |
| Advance Large Football | \$70 |
| Atlas Bantam 8 sided | \$60 |
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| NW Model 31 | \$85 |
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| NW Model 33 5# Frosted | \$115 |
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Rarefied Vintage----Take a Close Look!

by the late **Ken Rounds**

There aren't many Victor Vending specialists, and I'm proud to be one of them. While a lot of collectors might turn up their noses at something so recent, I use my nose to root out the rarities and the differences. And yes, there are rarities. You have to take a close look at what you have in order to find them but, when you do, it's a real kick.

These three vending machines are from my personal collection. They are among the rarest of Victor machines. The Victor HOME RUN, at left, is one of about six survivors of this game. The center game is the Victor CANNON BALL and, as far as I know, only three have survived. Finally, at the far right, is the Victor PREMIUM VENDOR. This is the only example known to me.

The problem that exists, and the reason for the low survival rate among these games, is that they date from 1940 or 1941 and were originally made in limited quantities due to material shortages relative to the demands of wartime production. All three games work using the same general principle. One places a penny in the slide and pushes in. This releases a holding wheel in the rear of the machine,

giving you a gumball which rolls toward the front center of the machine. By using the gun paddle arm, the player attempts to bat the gumball thru the target, at the top of the playfield. If successful, the gumball drops into a visible slot below the target, and the player is awarded a prize. The batter can keep hitting away at gumballs so long as the target is made, that is, until the player misses. Then the gumball rolls into the delivery chute located at the right of the casing.

A slot in the back door allows the proprietor to release the displayed gumballs that have been shot into the target. They are retained in a holding chamber for reimbursement by the route man to cover whatever prizes had been awarded.

CANNON BALL has a cannon turret in place of the more conventional gun shooter. PREMIUM VENDOR offers high-profile award such as a fountain pen or a cigarette lighter.

I am very proud of my offbeat Victors, and it is doubtful if collectors will see these three games together in one collection, if at all - however, all machines have since been sold.



Three rare Victory batting games. HOME RUN, at left, has the original gumballs. CANNON BALL, center, has a gun turret. The 1941 PREMIUM VENDOR, right, is the only surviving example known.

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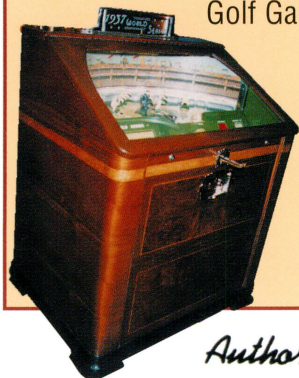
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